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The clear definition of poetry considered psychologically—that is, vitally—persuades more powerfully toward its enjoyment than any amount of critical eloquence; for it may be doubted if the rhetoric of appreciation ever really does more than confirm tastes already formed. Carrying on his method of analysis, Mr. Eastman shows that the poetic naming of things really enriches our experience of them. Children know this instinctively; in some degree we feel the truth of it every day of our lives. We might well be content with the simple correlation of poetic with ordinary experience; but if we seek further explanation, the process of poetic naming may be described as one of selection and comparison. The mind selects the point for most intense realization, and memory deepens the effect. Similarly, another familiar fact of experience—the fact that imaginative realization is often more intense than reality itself—affords a simple explanation of the spell of poetry—a spell not to be accounted unreal or illusory, since it is part of the very fabric of life. Incidentally, we find that the poetic figures are by no means indirect modes of expression, but that they contain the very essence of directness.

In detail the author discusses, from the psychological as opposed to the rhetorical standpoint, things, action, emotion, and thought as realized in poetry. In so doing he sweeps aside several “limiting definitions.” Emotion, for instance, is not, he maintains, “the essence nor a definitive feature of poetry. The most practical language—like earnest achievement—can awaken the emotions. It is not the existence of these emotions, but our attitude toward them that distinguishes the poetic mood. We wish to experience them for their own sake.”

Ingenious and plausible, though no indispensable part of the main thesis of the book, is Mr. Eastman’s explanation of the effect of rhythm in intensifying realization—an explanation which may strike some readers as leaning a little too heavily for support upon the not too obviously related phenomena of sleep and intoxication.

Mr. Eastman writes both imaginatively and logically. His quotations from a considerable variety of poets seem not merely to illustrate his thought, but to contain the germ of it. They justify the method of the book by the added value they derive from the context in which they are placed.

THE DAFFODIL FIELDS. By JOHN MASEFIELD. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913.

To find oneself, at this date, reading a long narrative poem, dealing with modern people and situations, and to find oneself, moreover, enjoying every word of it, is an amazing experience. Still more surprising is it to realize that peculiarities which we would have condemned antecedently as soul-offending defects have not offended us in the least. Before the fact, who would have admitted that such a line as

“The Irishman removed his pipe and spoke”

would be tolerable, would be even conceivable, in, of all things, the Spenserian stanza? There are any number of such lines in *The Daffodil Fields*. There are, in fact, whole passages which might tempt derisory comparison with Crabbe’s famous description of the dredger who

"—cold and wet and driving with the tide
 Beats his weak arms against his tarry side,
Then drains the remnant of diluted gin
 To aid the warmth that languishes within."

Compare with this Mr. Masfield's stanza:

"His footing paid, he joined the living-shed,
 Lined with rude bunks and set with trestles: there
He, like the other ranchers, slept and fed,
Save when the staff encamped in open air,
 Rounding the herd for branding. Rude and bare
 The barrack was; men littered it about
 With saddles, blankets blue, old headstalls, many a clout—"

But there is all the difference in the world between Crabbe at his worst and Masfield at his homeliest. For at his homeliest Masfield is still a true poet, and even when he is prosy he is never perfunctory, nor by any chance unintentionally comic. At his best he gives us the purest poetic pleasure. Nothing could be more unexpectedly delicious than a passage such as this:

"The bull-calf gamboled with his tail acock,
 Then shyly nosed towards them, scared but tame;
 His troublous eyes were sulky with blue flame.
 Softly he tiptoed, shying at a touch;
 He nosed, his breath came sweet, his pale tongue curled to clutch."

And of such passages there is an extraordinary variety. Fundamental sincerity, singleness of aim, truth of detail—these, with the liquidity of his verse, are the qualities that make Mr. Masfield's plainest narrative acceptable, while they underlie the originality of his finest stanzas. At times he is so naïve an impressionist that we think of him momentarily as a poetic Stephen Crane:

"And there the pickers come, picking for town
 Those dancing daffodils; all day they pick;
 Hard-featured women, weatherbeaten brown,
 Of swarthy red, the color of old brick—"

At other times he gives us beauty of the more traditional sort:

"There are three fields where daffodils are found;
 The grass is dotted blue-gray with their leaves;
 Their nodding beauty shakes along the ground
 Up to a fir-clump shutting out the eaves
 Of an old farm, where always the wind grieves
 High in the fir boughs, moaning—"

But whatever else he is, he is always genuine. The narrative form suits his genius, and his genius reconciles us to the much-abused narrative form. For the form does not require the poet to be always—or always to pretend to be—under the greatest stress of inspiration, and so it conduces to genuineness. The reader is not weighed down with factitious melancholy, nor oppressed with a heavy atmosphere, nor bedazzled with generalities. Limpid narrative, when no more is required, dialogue that appeals solely by its unrestrained expression of emotion,

beautiful pictures and poignant emotion upon occasion—what more in all conscience can we ask? It almost seems that one who could fail to feel the charm of Mr. Masfield's verse would be capable of disliking Chaucer! Certainly, if we like *The Daffodil Fields*, we may be sure that what we enjoy is poetry, and that we have not been deluded by a trick of mood or a mere chime of words.

TALES OF THE MERMAID TAVERN. By ALFRED NOYES. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1913.

In his new volume of poems Alfred Noyes does supremely well the thing that he may always be depended upon to do. He pours forth quantities of splendid verse, satisfying in sound and lavish in imagery. Mr. Noyes commands the whole range of his instrument: no one uses with such astonishing variety of effect the power of rhythm to stir and soothe, the subtle music of syllables, or the echoing suggestiveness of words. He has "the touch of velvet and thunder."

It is ungrateful to find fault with poetry that exhilarates if it does not exalt. Of a poet lyrically so gifted it is, perhaps, beside the mark to say that we miss the touch of genius in his phrases, and that he has hardly a line that will bear comparison with a really great line. Of more weight, if it be justified, is the feeling some of us may have that in writing Elizabethan ballads Mr. Noyes has somehow missed (except musically) the ballad note. In other words, the robustness of the verses may seem to us, on the whole, a little sentimental and shrill, and at his best Mr. Noyes makes us think rather of a Shelley or Keats, writing of taverns and adventures instead of clouds or nightingales, than of a Kipling or a Scott. Is the tale of "Black Bill's Honeymoon," in which a burly English seaman hunting for honey in a strange land is plunged up to his neck in a hollow tree full of the treasure he sought, and rescued therefrom by a bear—is this truly written in the spirit of Elizabethan manhood, or is it not conceived full more in the spirit of a nursery tale? Is the tragedy of Kit Marlowe, as told by Mr. Noyes, terrible, or merely intensely sentimental? Are we not dealing, in fact, with an Elizabethan fairyland rather than with anything like the truly Elizabethan scene?

Such questions inevitably arise, but they may be safely suppressed. If Mr. Noyes's Elizabethan world suggests a tapestry, the tapestry at all events wavers to gusts of emotion, it flaps with color, and its glowing figures seem really alive. There is magic in his verse even if we cannot help feeling a lack of the substantial humanity which it so insistently professes to portray.

THE LORE OF PROSERPINE. By MAURICE HEWLETT. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913.

Those who are lured to read Mr. Hewlett's book by the hope of biographical information or in the expectation of discovering the secret of his temperament have only a very moderate satisfaction in store for them. *The Lore of Proserpine* is a hypnotic book: it is a lesson in magic, which will almost teach one how to believe the impossible; but it is far from